CAVES

BY

FRANK MOORE

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CAVES*
a book for a performance tour
by
FRANK MOORE

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SPRING, 1987

THE ART DEPARTMENT
DENVER

FRANKLIN FURNACE
NEW YORK CITY

THE SIXTH SENSE
NEW YORK CITY

THE PAINTED BRIDE
PHILADELPHIA

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Eroplay in Life and Art

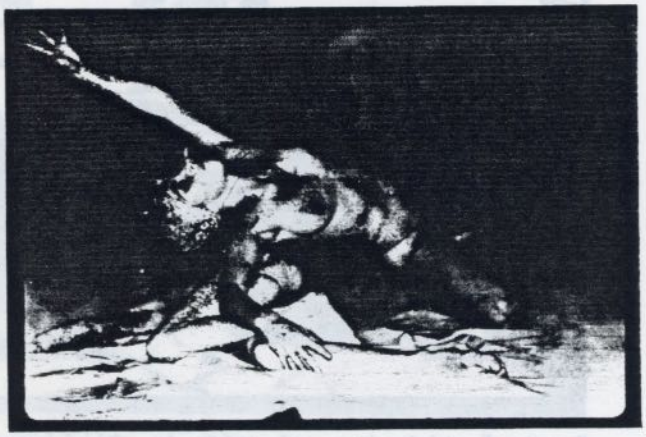
a work in progress

Frank Moore

Eroplay is a made-up word for intense physical playing and touching of oneself and others. Eroplay is also the force of energy which is released as the result of such play.

Our mind needs labels, words for something to be able to think about the thing clearly. There is such intense physical play, and such a force of energy, which I have labeled eroplay. But before this, there has not been a word for it. Usually the word sex has been the catchword for people to dump on almost everything sensual, romantic, physical, or showing more skin than usual. Cars are called sexy. Poses that do not show the sex act are called sexual. Wearing certain things, moving certain ways are all called sexual even when it is not leading to the sexual act . . . even when there is no intent to have sex.

In magic, words have power. To create a word for something is to create the possibility for it to exist in our reality . . . for it to happen. Even for us who intellectually knew eroplay existed as a separate thing from sex, it was hard before the word eroplay to talk about it clearly, to think about it clearly, and to experiment and play with it without sexual undercurrents and fears creeping in. This was because we had to use words like lusty, sexy and erotic to attempt to talk about it. In our language, all of these words have sexual connotations. In magic, words create. So if you use sexual words for non-sexual



playing, the sexual words will create a false sexual confusion. This is why the word eroplay itself is important.

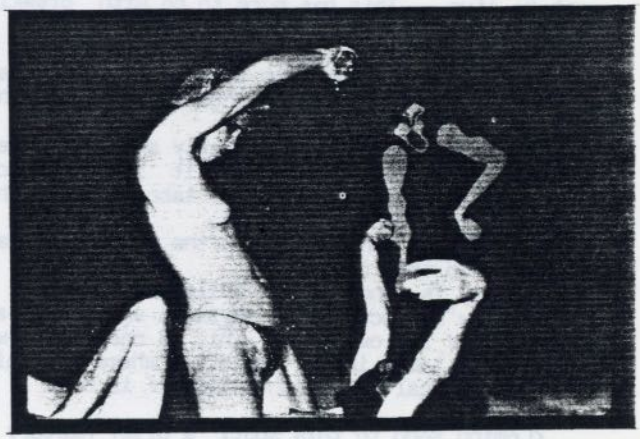
Eroplay is not foreplay, even though foreplay is eroplay.

I have a somewhat good idea of what eroplay does to and for people. But the causes of the results are untested theory.

Kids play very physically both with their own bodies and others' bodies. They get turned-on by this play, turned-on both physically and mentally. This turn-on is not sexual in kids. Studies have shown that babies who are held, touched, and played with are more healthy and alert, weigh more, and have a lower rate of death than babies who are denied this eroplay. Studies also show that old people who live alone, who don't get physical and emotional contact, are less healthy and die sooner than people of the same age who live with others and get that physical contact.

When we grow up to adults, eroplay is linked to sex, maybe to assure procreation, but there may be different results when eroplay is connected to the sexual orgasm. We may need a certain amount of straight eroplay (not connected to or leading to sex) to be as healthy as possible.

Foreplay leads to orgasm. . . eroplay leads to being turned on in many different ways and in all parts of the body. It can be different every time.



The Glitter Act

Skin touching skin seems to be what releases the full impact of eroplay.

Eroplay can be intense. It is like rubbing a puppy on its belly; the puppy goes into a state of rapture, both totally turned-on and relaxed. To use something that is not normally confused with sex, eroplay is the blissed-out, warm, relaxed, turned-on, totally satisfying feeling of a good head rub. The same feeling comes from playing with one's ears. Eroplay is that intense feeling throughout the entire body.

Sex seems to be connected to mating; whereas the combination of both physical and psychic forces released during and after eroplay seems to be connected more to communication and attracting people to you.

What stops most people from physically eroplaying without connecting it to sex, without sexual undercurrents or expectations, is the inability to see where eroplay ends and sex begins. The difference between foreplay and pure eroplay is one of intent . . . physically there is no difference. But there is a difference physically between eroplay and sex. Eroplay is satisfying in itself, in relaxing intensity. There is no build-up of pent-up energy in one climactic act. In sex, however, there is a point where foreplay (eroplay) ceases to satisfy and energy gets pent up and built up to be released in the sex act. This build-up is a clear and broad dividing line between the turn-on of eroplay and sex.

Eroplay starts when the possibility of the physical eroplay arises, the possibility of breaking normal rules, social conventions, and morality.

The possibility of physical eroplay is enough to start releasing whatever chemicals and other forces that physical eroplay will continue to release. Talking and thinking about eroplay will excite, will turn you on, even physically. This seems to be a natural part of eroplay, an innate part.

But the turn-on of the possibility of breaking the taboos, rules, and the common morality is not a natural part of eroplay. It has been added on to eroplay by social repression. Anytime you break a social taboo, there is a release of energy

that may feel good, almost like a high. But sooner or later you have to go back into the system where that taboo still exists. Then, more often than not, you will get a backlash from the breaking of the taboo. This backlash may take many forms; it may come from inside yourself or from others who have not been in the uncommon experience. This backlash may overwhelm you. This is the only bad side effect connected to eroplay. If you can ride out this backlash--if you have it at all--you will be a stronger person and you can modify the moral system to fit how you want to live. This has more to do with breaking taboos than it has to do with eroplay itself.

But breaking taboos has always been a part of art . . . at least the area of art that seems to change consciousness, change morality, change reality.

The breaking of taboos ideally should not be a part of everyday eroplay, but it is. Art can slowly take eroplay out of the taboo area. This is one of the functions of art.

Eroplay is fun. This is the most important statement in this outline.

Eroplay is innocent and childlike.

Eroplay's focus is on physical enjoyment and pleasure for its own sake. This is one reason why eroplay is taboo in our society, where religion teaches physical pleasure for itself is bad.

<Coming soon to this spot: a brief history of the western romanticiscm and the anti-pleaure morality . . . what eroplay is up against.>

Eroplay connects you more with your own body and with other people. It decreases isolation and alienation. It increases self-trust and trusting of others. It makes you harder to be controlled. This is another reason why eroplay is taboo.

Because the after-glow of eroplay attracts people to you, you get more opportunities in all aspects of your life. And because eroplay relaxes you and gives you more energy, you are in a better position to use opportunities.

Because eroplay is not focused on goals other than physical enjoyment in many ways, and because it does not lead to a mating life, eroplay would be much harder to use to sell products than sex. This is another reason why eroplay is taboo.

Most of the so-called sex problems in sexual relationships have to do with trying to do with sex what eroplay can do, trying to fill needs with sex that sex can't fulfill. This leads to the downward spiral of frustration, self-doubt, trying too hard, and blame. Even legitimate marriage and sex counselors advise more play which does not lead to sex as well as more foreplay with sex.

Since eroplay may release certain chemicals in the body, to get familiar with what eroplay itself does, not adding other chemicals will help.

Since in a sexual relationship there is always the possibility of sex, eroplay is always different in a sexual relationship than in a non-sexual relationship, even when the eroplay does not lead to sex . . . because, as we have seen, possibility is an important factor. So eroplay in a sexual relationship is always in relationship to the possibility of sex.

Since eroplay is not mate-originated, it is possible to have a relationship with a friend in which eroplay is an important part, but in which the possibility of sex and romance is very clearly excluded. This kind of relationship will have good effects on your other relationships.

To illustrate both what eroplay can do, and the difference in effect of eroplay and sex, I offer a page out of my life. In the 70's, I had a group of about thirty people. It was fairly clear to us that there was a difference between playing and sex. It was not as clear to us as it is in this paper. We saw that it has something to do with sex and "marriage" (the word "marriage" is another word that has negative connotations hidden within it), so we decided to commit ourselves to having sex only with those to whom we were married. But we eroplayed with all of the people in the group. The eroplay became more intense, more playful. We as people got wackier, more physical. It gave us a greater freedom not only within our group, but in the general society as well. By eroplaying intensely, but playfully, it released a certain creativity which we used in many ways. Successful businesses were established. We did several public performances, a stage show that ran for three years, and a wealth of wacky private performances. All of these had the vital energy of eroplay, of unlimited possibility. We were kids playing together even though we were adults. Even though the eroplay could become very intimate, physical, soft, and sexy, there was no jealousy or possessiveness because it was clear that sex would not be involved. This went on for three years.

But . . . you have been waiting for this "but" . . . at a certain point, we started questioning the concept of marriage: What was the difference between what we thirty had together and being married? We did not see any difference. (We were using the misleading word "marriage." I see now that we should have used the word

"mating," which does not refer to child-bearing, but to bonding.) Not seeing any difference between marriage and what we had, the next logical question was, "Why not have sex?" So we started to have sex outside marriage within the group. Almost immediately changes appeared in the group. Jealousy and possessiveness appeared. The playful creativity which came from eroplay dried up. Playing and the physical freedom between the people quickly ceased to be. The spark of our show was not there anymore. The group as a group quickly began to fall apart.

This is why my interest in the difference between sex and eroplay has increased and formalized in my art . . . why I long to tap again into intense, pure eroplay with people, then use the resulting creativity in art without being derailed by sex.

Which brings us to eroart.

Thanks to the repressive, sexual, anti-pleasure morality, romanticiscm, and pornography, the traditional area of eroart--art that uses nudity, physicality, and/or sex to turn people on to life--has been ripped off by pornography.

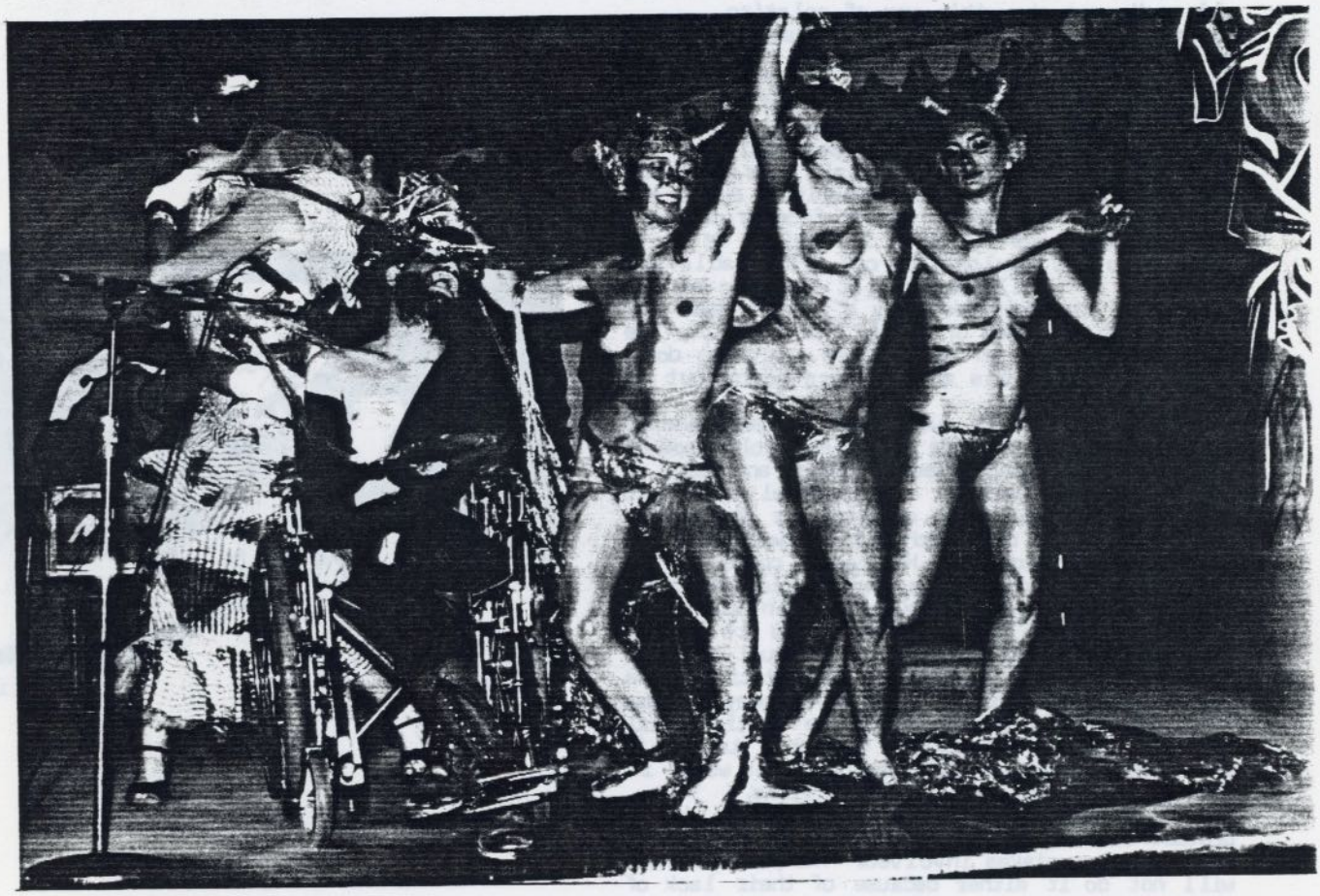
Almost everyone is against porn films. Almost everybody in his right mind. But everybody isn't in his right mind, which is why there is porn anyway.

But it is fashionable to be against porn. There are many good reasons to be against porn.

Fashion is not one of them.

The anti-sex, anti-pleasure, anti-nudity morality is not one of the good reasons to be anti-porn. This kind of repressive morality was the main reason why during the nineteenth century kinky violent porn caught on.

What I am interested in is art that creates in people the desire to go out and play with other people, and to enjoy life. This is the art of eroplay. Historically, one of the tools of this art has been the sex act. But sex has only been a tool, not the goal. And it is just one of many tools. Isadora Duncan is a person whom I would call an artist in the eroplay tradition. She used nudity (especially at private parties where she could dance without feeling moral judgements) and movement to turn people on physically to their own bodies and to passion for life. This is the true goal of eroplay art, which has been called eroart. Most books on eroart miss the true purpose of such



art. There has always been sexual erotic art. This kind of art is universal and can be traced back to the caves and beyond.

<Coming soon to this spot: a brief history of erotic performance art.>

This is not true for what is defined as porn. I am trying to define eroart. We are forced to separate it from porn, and rightly so.

It is fashionable to be anti-porn. But it is human to be anti-porn because porn is anti-human, not only anti-female. It is violence between individual people. At times, this violence is graphic. It is personal and intimate violence in a hostile and impersonal form. I hurt you to make me feel turned-on because I cannot get turned-on in any other way because I cannot feel ... besides, you like being hurt ... if you don't ... who cares .... This isn't the symbolic or surreal violence in other kinds of films.

Porn is also anti-human because it creates a picture of what sex should be that is unreal and boring. It creates pictures of what you should be like ... pictures which are hard to live up to ... and if you do live up to them, you will be a big-dicked jerk or a big-titted bimbo.

These are the fundamental reasons why to be anti-porn.

But face it, the main reason that most people are anti-porn is because porn is boring and dumb. The people who make porn (I am talking about straight porn now, leaving the kinky, violent porn in the trash can) think that the main reason why people go to see porn is to see tubes going in and out of holes. So they cram in as many tubes going in and out of holes as possible in ninety minutes ... and as close-up as possible. This may be true for some people, but for most people, it gets boring once curiosity is satisfied, curiosity about what it looks like, and once the possibility of seeing everything is fulfilled.

It is fashionable to be anti-porn. But it is not fashionable to offer an alternative to porn. It is not fashionable to admit that people like seeing other people nude, seeing other people getting turned-on and being turned-on. It is not fashionable to admit people are curious to see other people's bodies, to see what they are really like under those clothes. It is not fashionable to admit people feel cheated whenever the camera moves away, fades away, when the people on the screen are getting intimate. It is not fashionable because it would be putting yourself, your body, and your emotions where your ideals and your politics are.

To make videos that satisfy that child-like need of seeing nude bodies and seeing people playing, making out, and having fun is not as

profitable as either what Hollywood does or what the porn-makers do. This child-like need is the healthy human desire that is perverted in porn.

The time is right for an art form that addresses this healthy desire. The women's movement has changed people's standards with regard to sex and the quality of relationships. This is true of both men and of women. They have scrapped, or are scrapping the old sexist ways and attitudes, and now they find the old-style porn disgusting . . . but more importantly, they are finding porn is not meeting their needs and desires. They want to be turned-on in a way that is not sexual; they want to see nudity without stupidity; they want to see new ways of relating between humans both in and out of bed. Eroart in all media can show this way of relating . . . can show both purely nonsexual eroplay and eroplay as foreplay in sex.

Film and video can do this. But the producers of porn haven't the foggiest idea of this, and have a vested interest in the meat approach. In its broadest definition, erovideo could be any kind of film -- westerns, thrillers, science fiction , etc.--in which the unwritten rules are not followed. The camera doesn't fade or cut away from erotic scenes before it is logical to do so . . . bodies wouldn't be cut off. Cable has made porn so available that it has removed the glamour of the forbidden. As a result, porn has to stand on its lack of merit. As a result, the sales and rentals on adult tapes are going down, and the adult cable systems are going out of business.

The desire to see nudity and intimacy and to be turned-on is not being satisfied. Hollywood is caught between being ruled by taboos and being in the business of teasing. Andy Warhol once said Hollywood has been doing a forty-year striptease, showing a little more each year to get people to come back. The closest Hollywood comes to the erotic/sexual (except for a few maverick directors like Roeg) is the sex-exploitation and youth exploitation films. There seems to be an unwritten rule that if it is sexy-sexual-nude, it has to be dumb. Hollywood does exploitative films because they make money. They make money because they are the closest thing to the erotic/sexual that is offered. But sitting through a dumb movie to see nude bodies of dumb people is not worth it. Hollywood, however, will not take risks.

Hollywood will not make such a risky, daring product as a truly erotic film mainly because of the high money stakes involved. The pornographers will not do it either because of their lack of skill, insight, and morality, or because they too are ruled by money, and by criminals.

But breaking taboos has always been a part of art, at least the area of art that seeks to change consciousness, change morality, change reality. The breaking of taboos ideally should not be a part of eroplay for everyday life. But

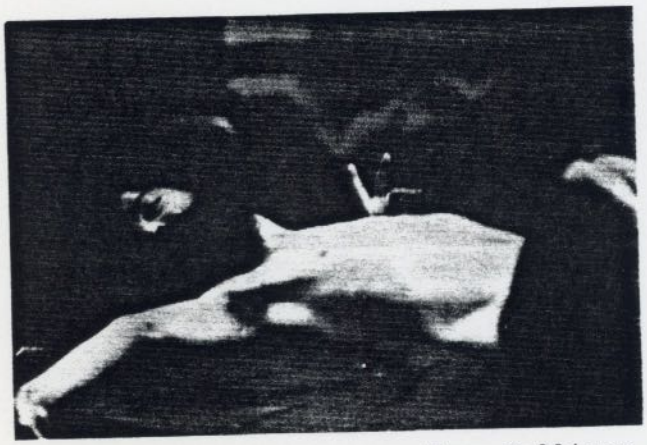
The Meat Act Dave Patrick

Some of the accompanying photographs are of acts within a performance/ exhibition called "The Outrageous Beauty Revue," conducted for several years by Frank Moore in L.A and S.F.

it is. Art can slowly take eroplay out of the taboo area. This is one of the functions of art.

Here is where art comes in. As I have said, this kind of art creates a kind of bubble in which the forbidden can be done with immunity, releasing energy of the broken taboo . . . energy which then affects society as a whole. Art makes a clear circle of difference between this bubble and everyday reality; it is a kind of safety valve for society . . . much as dreams are to the individual. According to the book THE PAINTED BODY, the caves where the first artists did their work where no one could see were such bubbles, as was body painting. Performance art is this kind of consciousness-altering art. It creates a special time and place where taboos can be broken, where new ways can be introduced into the society.

The other way that art can make it easier for us in everyday life, and at the same time fight against the anti-pleasure, anti-human morality, against sexism, against pornography, against romanticiscm, is by showing us eroplay, both with and without sex,and getting us acquainted and comfortable with eroplay. This can be done in all media. Enter erovision. Erotic projects could be made on half-inch video tape by individual artists to be sold directly by mail from the artist to the individual viewer. This would avoid the power structures that grow up around big money. Half-inch video, home video, is cheap in materials, editing, and post-production, and distribution is much, much cheaper than in any other format. The technical quality is acceptable, and free from the comparison with film or professional three-quarter inch video. Home video is the workable channel for any product that the establishment will not touch . . . or that you don't want the establishment to touch, hence control. Such is erovideo.



Frank Moore Mary Sullivan

Whether we as artists do eroart to release magically eroplay into the air (such as through performance art) or to show the non-sexual way of relating that is eroplay (such as through video or film) . . . whether we choose to use the sex act or not in our eroart . . . we must not let our work be defined in relation to pornography. There has been a huge amount of time and energy wasted trying to define and ban pornography. The best way to undermine sexism and pornography is to create an alternative to them. Take back nudity, pleasure, sex, and eroticism from pornography. Show pornography up as being drab, inhuman, unfun by creating a fun, human, happy alternative. Create eroart! This is overstating the case somewhat because you cannot do good eroart if it is in reaction to porn . . . only if it comes from some warm and playful place, can it be good eroart. Unless we put ourselves--our creativity, our minds, and, yes, our bodies into representing eroart as the humanistic alternative, the pornographer, the sexualist, and the moralist will win by default.

WRAPPING AND ROCKING

BY

FRANK MOORE

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THE TWO NUDES FIGURES SIT IN
TIME AND SPACE.
ONE UPON THE OTHER.
ROCKING TOGETHER.
ROCKING IN THEIR CAVE.

TWO MAGIC FIGURES ROCKING TOGETHER AGAINST TIME.
ROCKING BACK THROUGH TIME.
BACK AND FORTH.

MOTHER ROCKING HER BABY.
ROCKING AGAINST SICKNESS AND TEARS.
ROCKING BACK INTO LOVE AND PEACE.

IN THE CAVE,
UNSEEN EXCEPT BY THE SPIRITS,
THE HOLYMEN ROCK OUT OF THIS REALITY
OF PERSONAL ISOLATION OF GREYS.
ROCK UNTIL THEY ROCK
INTO THE PULSE OF PURE LIGHT.
BACK AND FORTH UNTIL AT-ONE-NESS CAME,
UNTIL ATONEMENT CAME...
NOT JUST FOR THEM...
BUT THOSE OUTSIDE THE CAVE.

MAGIC ROCKING.
PASSION ROCKING.
ALMOST SEXUAL,
NOT QUITE.
BEYOND SEXUAL.

TWO BODIES ROCKING TOGETHER,
RUBBING ISOLATION AWAY.

GRANDPA SITS IN HIS ROCKINGCHAIR,
SLOWLY HOLDING ONTO CREAKING PASSON OF LIVING.

LOVERS DANCE,
ROCKING BACK AND FORTH TO THE MUSIC.
SOMETIMES FAST.
SOMETIMES SLOW.
PASSION RISES WARM AND COMFORTING.
PAIN AND GRIEF DISAPPEAR.
A KID HOLDING ON A BLANKET,

ROCK BACK AND FORTH,
HOLDING ONTO THE WRAPPING
THAT HOLDS US ALL TOGETHER.
COLORFUL RIBBONS OF OUR CACOON.
THE 2 LOVERS PUMPING
HARD ON THE SWING, WORKING TOGETHER
TO GET THE HIGHEST
THRILLING FLYING AND SWOOSHING DROP
IN THEIR BELLIES
AND,
YES,
IN THEIR LOINS.
ALMOST SEXUAL,
BUT NOT QUITE.
SEX WOULD GET
IN THE WAY OF
THE CHILD-LIKE MELTING
OF EARTH AND SKY.

BACK AND FORTH,
UP AND DOWN,
WRAPPING US TOGETHER
IN BRIGHTNESS
AND SOFTNESS
AND THE MAGICAL COMMONNESS.

A GIRL LAUGHS
ON A BIG OLD ROCKING HORSE.
A G.I., HOLDING HIS GUTS IN,
BLOOD OOZING OUT,
ROCKS ON THE BATTLEFIELD...
ROCKS TO KEEP LIFE IN
AND PAIN OUT.

LIGHT PULSES,
REFLECTED OFF TIN AND PLASTIC.

DADDY ROCKING BABY TO SLEEP ON HIS LAP.
COZY TOGETHERNESS IN RIBBONS,
ROCKING BY THE FIRE
FAR AWAY FROM REALITY.

THE ARAB WOMAN,
ON HER KNEES BESIDE
THE UNRECOGNIZABLE REMAINS OF HER HUSBAND...
ROCKING TO HANDLE GRIEF AND PAIN.

A CRAZY ROCKS
ON THE STREETCORNER,
TALKING TO BEINGS FROM ANOTHER REALITY.

WRAP US UP COZY.
WRAP US WARMLY.
MAYPOLE DANCERS WITH RIBBONS.
ADMIT THAT WE ALL ARE WRAPPED UP TOGETHER
IN SEE-THROUGH TIES.

THE GYPSY WOMAN,
EYES CLOSED,
ROCKS BACK AND FORTH,
GIVING MASTER SPIRITS
HER VOICE AND HER BODY
TO SPEAK THROUGH.
ROCKING IN HER TENT.

THE BOYS ROCKING
UNCONTROLLABLE FROM LAUGHTER
AT THEIR CHILDISH PRANKS.

ROCKING SURREALISTIC IN THE DARKNESS,
IN THEIR COLORFUL BONDS,
THE TWO NUDE FIGURES,
USING MAGICAL PASSON TO MELT TOGETHER,
ROCK LIKE THE BLIND,
LIKE THE INSANE,
LIKE THE HOLY MEN,
LIKE LOVERS...
AND THE MAGICAL MELTING SPREADS OUT OF THE CAVE
AND INTO THE WORLD.

MAGICAL ART

FRANK MOORE

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LIKE MOST ARTISTS, I LOVE TO TALK ABOUT MYSELF. BUT TODAY I WILL TRY TO CURB THIS URGE. I WANT TODAY TO TALK ABOUT THE ROOTS OF PERFORMANCE AS AN AVANT-GARDE ART, USING MYSELF AND MY WORK JUST AS AN EXAMPLE.

BUT I AM ALSO HERE TO ENCOURAGE AT LEAST SOME OF YOU TO FOCUS YOUR ART CAREERS ON DOING LIVE AVANT-GARDE PERFORMANCE. I HAVE SELFISH REASONS FOR THIS.

I THINK PERFORMANCE IS BEING RUINED BY TRYING TO PACKAGE IT AS ENTERTAINMENT, AS OFF-BEAT CABARET. SOME PERFORMANCE IS ENTERTAINING. SOME PERFORMANCE IS CABARET. THAT IS GREAT. BUT WHEN YOU TRY TO PACKAGE PERFORMANCE INTO A NEAT CABARET FORMAT, AS I THINK IS THE TREND, TO MAKE PERFORMANCE ACCEPTABLE AND PROFITABLE, IT BECOMES A HIP FORM OF NIGHTCLUB WATCHING OR GROOVY T.V. WATCHING. IF YOU LIMIT PERFORMANCE IN TIME AND SPACE FOR ACCEPTABILITY, IT STOPS BEING PERFORMANCE.

I LIKE DOING CABARET AND VIDEO. THEY ARE GREAT MEDIUMS IN THEMSELVES. BUT WHEN I AM DOING CABARET OR VIDEO, I AM ALWAYS AWARE OF THE LIMITATIONS BUILT INTO THE FORMAT. WHEN SOMEONE WATCHES A VIDEO, HE KNOWS THAT HE WILL REMAIN PASSIVELY WATCHING FROM THE OUTSIDE; THE VIDEO WILL NOT LITERALLY POP OUT INTO HIS REALITY, OR PHYSICALLY DRAG HIM INTO THE T.V.. WHEN SOMEONE GOES TO A CABARET, HE KNOWS THERE ARE CERTAIN LIMITS INVOLVED SUCH AS EACH ACT MUST END FOR ANOTHER TO BEGIN. BUT IN PERFORMANCE, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE. A PERFORMANCE CAN LAST FOR A MINUTE OR IT CAN LAST FOR DAYS. PERFORMANCE CAN START IN ONE SPACE BUT THEN MOVE TO ANOTHER. PERFORMANCE CAN BE STORYTELLING, IT CAN BE A GUY THREATENING YOU WITH A BASEBALL BAT, IT CAN BE A GUY HANGING BY HIS SKIN, OR THROWING FOOD, OR ANYTHING. IN PERFORMANCE ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. AND THAT IS WHAT GIVES YOU AN EXTRA EDGE TO CREATE DREAMS.

MANY OF THE OLD GARDE LIKE PAUL McCARTHY, CHRIS BURDON, ALAN KAPROW, AND LINDA BURNHAM HAVE STOPPED DOING LIVE PERFORMANCE. MOREOVER, MANY YOUNG ARTISTS, WHO WOULD HAVE FOCUSED ON HARD-CORE LIVE ART, ARE BEING SEDUCED AWAY BY VIDEO AND CABARET PACKAGING. I HAVE A SELFISH

MOTIVE FOR WANTING MORE DARING LIVE PERFORMERS ...I HAVE REALIZED MY OWN WORK HAS BEEN LIMITED BY THE GENERAL LACK OF AN AVANT-GARDE LIVE PERFORMANCE COMMUNITY, ESPECIALLY IN THE BAY AREA, THAT IS FOCUSED ON SUBVERSION, ON MAGIC, ON ALTERING REALITY...AND THAT IS NOT AFRAID OF COMBINING THEIR INDIVIDUAL ARTS TOGETHER.

PERFORMANCE, LIKE ANY AVANT-GARDE ART, IS THE WAY SOCIETY DREAMS; IT IS THE WAY SOCIETY EXPANDS ITS FREEDOM, EXPLORES THE FORBIDDEN IN SAFETY, TO LOOSEN UP. SOCIETY NEEDS ITS DREAM ART, JUST AS AN INDIVIDUAL NEEDS TO DREAM OR GO INSANE. OUR MORAL MAJORITY SOCIETY, BENT ON GOING BACKWARDS INTO THE VIOLENT BLANK RIGIDITY OF A CENSORED MIND, NEEDS TABOO-BREAKING DREAMS TO GET BACK TO FREEDOM. PERFORMANCE IS PERFECTLY SUITED FOR THIS DREAM ROLE. I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BRING DREAMS INTO REALITY.

I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN LUCKY. I HAVE A BODY THAT IS IDEAL FOR A PERFORMANCE ARTIST. AND I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A PERFORMER. WHEN I WAS A KID, MY YOUNGER BROTHER USED TO GET MAD WHEN PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME WHEN HE PUSHED ME TO THE MOVIES OR TO THE TEEN CLUB. HE CRIED. BUT I LIKED PEOPLE LOOKING AT ME. THAT IS WHAT I MEAN BY I AM LUCKY. I AM LUCKY I AM AN EXHIBITIONIST IN THIS BODY. ONE TIME, I WAS WORKING OUT ON THE JUNGLE GYM OUTSIDE OF OUR HOUSE...A KID CAME BY AND ASKED IF I WAS MONSTER. I JUST ROARED LIKE A MONSTER. IT WAS FUN.

I WAS LUCKY. I WAS NEVER UNDER PRESSURE TO BE GOOD AT ANYTHING, TO MAKE MONEY, TO MAKE IT IN "THE REAL WORLD," TO BE POLISHED...AND THE OTHER DISTRACTIONS THAT OTHER MODERN ARTISTS HAVE TO, OR THINK THEY HAVE TO, DEAL WITH. SO I COULD FOCUS ON HAVING FUN, ON GOING INTO TABOO AREAS WHERE MAGICAL CHANGE CAN BE EVOKED.

MY PERSONAL ROOTS ARE IN THE IDEALISM OF THE '60'S. THAT WAS WHEN I BROKE OUT OF PERSONAL PHYSICAL ISOLATION. I LOOKED FOR A WAY TO BRING ABOUT THE IDEALS FOR ME AND FOR THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. THE NORMAL CHANNELS OBVIOUSLY WOULD NOT WORK FOR ME.

SO ALL I HAD WERE MY FANTASIES. WHAT IF SOMEBODY REALLY COULD DO WHAT HAPPENED IN the magus OR steppenwolf...OR LIVE LIKE HUXLEY'S island! I WISHED I COULD BE A HIP ARTIST LIVING IN S.F. IN A

COMMUNE.

BUT I DIDN'T THINK I COULD GET PEOPLE TO LET ME DIRECT THEM IN THE RITUALS IN MY HEAD. IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1970 THAT I ATTEMPTED MY FIRST FORMAL PERFORMANCE. MY PERFORMANCE WAS TRYING TO GET THE OK AT CAL STATE, SAN BERNARDINO TO PRODUCE MY ALL-NUDE PLAY ON CAMPUS. TO MY SURPRISE, THE COLLEGE SAID YES. BUT I COULDN'T GET ACTORS. I WASN'T REALLY INTO SEX ITSELF IN MY ART. I JUST WANTED TO SEE NUDE BODIES ON STAGE ...NOT SNEAK IT IN A LOVE SCENE...AND SEE THEM DO THINGS LIKE PAINT THEIR BODIES WITH BABY FOOD...I LEARNED IT CAN BE HARD TO GET PEOPLE FOR WEIRD THINGS.

I STARTED TO SEE MY BODY AS A TOOL. I COULD GET AWAY WITH THINGS THAT OTHERS COULDN'T.

I CAN STARE AT PEOPLE, LAUGH AT THEM, TOUCH THEIR ASSES ON THE STREET...BECAUSE THEY DON'T THINK I UNDERSTAND. I CAN PARK MYSELF NEXT TO THEM AND OBSERVE THEM CLOSE-UP WITHOUT THEM REALIZING OR CHANGING. THAT IS BEING SO VISIBLE THAT IT CREATES INVISIBILITY. BUT THERE ARE OTHER ADVANTAGES OF MY BODY. PEOPLE PROJECT ONTO ME CERTAIN MYSTICAL POWERS...LIKE SEEING THROUGH THEIR FRONTS TO THEIR REAL SELVES...SEEING THE PAST AND THE FUTURE...AND WHAT THEY SHOULD DO. THEY ARE REACTING TO SOME SYMBOL OF THE DEFORMED MEDICINE MAN. THEY USE ME AS A MEDIUM FOR GETTING THROUGH TO OTHER DIMENSIONS. IT HAD LITTLE TO DO WITH ME AT THIS TIME. BECAUSE OF THE SLOWNESS OF MY COMMUNICATION BOARD, THEY WERE FORCED TO SLOW DOWN. THEY COULD PROJECT WHATEVER THEY WANTED, MISREAD ME WHEN IT FIT THEM. I WAS AN OBJECT AS A SYMBOL. AND BECAUSE THEY GAVE ME POWER AS A SYMBOL, THEY WERE AFRAID OF ME. AT THIS POINT, I DIDN'T FULLY BELIEVE THIS. BUT I ALWAYS HAVE KNOWN I DIDN'T WANT TO BE IN A NORMAL BODY.

YEARS LATER, WHEN I WAS GOING TO S.F.A.I., DOUG HALL TOLD ME MY BODY GAVE ME A TOOL THAT OTHER ARTISTS SPEND YEARS TO CREATE.

MOST ARTISTS ARE NOT AS LUCKY AS ME. THEY DO NOT HAVE THE BUILT-IN ADVANTAGES AND SHIELDS THAT I HAVE. THEY NEED TO RESIST THE REAL WORLD, THE NORMAL WORLD, MORE THAN I DO. THEY NEED TO BE MORE SNEAKY TO AVOID BEING SEDUCED BY THE BUSINESS AND POLITICS OF ART. IN FACT, HISTORICALLY, PERFORMANCE AS AN ART FORM CAME

INTO BEING AS A REACTION TO THIS SEDUCTION OF FORMAL ART. IN PERFORMANCE, YOU DO NOT NEED GALLERIES OR THEATERS, EQUIPMENT OR TOOLS...YOU DO NOT NEED AN AUDIENCE.

THIS WAS WHAT SEALED ME INTO A PERFORMANCE LIFE...I HAD NO MONEY... IN 1972, I JUST HAD FINISHED TAKING A VERY INTENSIVE FILM MAKING COURSE IN SANTA FE. I HAD NO MONEY TO MAKE REAL FILMS. SO I STARTED LOOKING FOR A WAY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE. I WANTED TO SEE PEOPLE NUDE, AND TOUCH THEM, AND TO CREATE AN INTENSITY BETWEEN US.

PAINTING WAS THE FIRST ATTEMPT. I USED TO SELL PAPERS ON A CORNER TO FIND PEOPLE TO PAINT. BUT ONCE THE PERSON WAS POSED, THE SITUATION WAS STILL, NOT MOVING.

SO I DID WHAT I CALLED NONFILMS...FOR WHICH I ASKED PEOPLE I MET WHEN I WAS SELLING NEWSPAPERS TO ACT OUT INTENSE EROTIC SCENES WITH ME. THESE WERE THE CLOSEST IN MY PIECES TO SEXUAL RATHER THAN EROTIC. BECAUSE OF THESE SCENES, THE PEOPLE STARTED TALKING ABOUT THEIR LIVES DURING THESE SESSIONS AND SAID IT HELPED THEIR OTHER RELATIONSHIPS. NOT ONE PERSON MINDED THAT THERE WAS NO FILM.

BUT I WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THESE NONFILMS BECAUSE THEY WERE BRIEF RELATIONSHIPS THAT DID NOT GO ANYWHERE. WHAT I WANTED TO DO WAS CREATE INTIMACY--THAT IS, A SITUATION IN WHICH ANYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE, WHERE PEOPLE FEEL THAT SECURE. I DIDN'T WANT TO CONNECT THIS INTIMACY WITH ROMANCE OR SEX BECAUSE THAT WOULD SET LIMITS. BUT THAT "ANYTHING IS PERMISSIBLE" DID MEAN A WIDE OPEN EROTIC FREEDOM.

SO I STARTED LOOKING FOR SOME OTHER WAY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE. I TRIED TO CAST A PLAY, BUT I COULDN'T FIND ENOUGH PEOPLE. I STARTED THINKING OF AN INTIMATE THEATRE WHERE THE LINE BETWEEN AUDIENCE AND ACTORS WOULD BE ERASED. I STARTED THINKING ABOUT HOW IF THAT LINE WERE ERASED, IT WOULD PLACE MUCH MORE RESPONSIBLITY ON THE ACTORS. THEY WOULD HAVE TO DARE TO TRICK THE AUDIENCE INTO THE INTENSE MAGICAL STATE.

I DIVIDED MY WORK--THE WORD "WORK" IS WEIRD--IT IS LIKE PLAYING--INTO TWO PARTS. THE FIRST PART IS PLAYED IN "REAL LIFE"...FOR INSTANCE, I GO UP TO A PERSON ON A STREET AND ASK HIM TO BE IN SOME PROJECT

WHICH MAY CONTAIN SOME NUDITY AND PHYSICAL PLAY. THE NUDITY AND PHYSICAL PLAY AS AN IDEA IN THIS CONTEXT IS A GREAT TOOL TO GET UNDER THE POLITE CHATTER SURFACE TO THE MORE MEANINGFUL THINGS, AND OFTEN MORE INTIMATE, MORE PERSONAL STUFF...WHICH IS, AFTER ALL, THE AIM OF THE PIECE. I CAN SEE THIS KIND OF PIECE LASTING ANYWHERE FROM A FEW SECONDS TO SEVERAL HOURS.

THE SECOND PART IS A PIECE IN A CONTROLLED SPACE, SUCH AS MY STUDIO, IN WHICH THERE IS A FORM GOING ON, GIVING THE PERSON A REASON TO BE THERE WITH ME.

THIS KIND OF PERFORMANCE IS DIFFERENT THAN NORMAL THEATRE. IN THIS KIND, THERE IS NO REAL SCRIPT. EVEN IF YOU HAVE A SCRIPT, IT REALLY IS A PROP. THE REAL COURSE OF ACTION IS SHAPED BY THE PERFORMER SO THE FLOW OF THE PIECE WILL GO FORWARD AND DEEPER.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN ME AS THE ARTIST AND MY AUDIENCE, HOW I CHANGE THEM AND HOW THEY CHANGE ME, THAT MAGICAL STATE IN WHICH WE INTERACT WITH EACH OTHER. I, AS THE PERFORMER, MUST CREATE AROUND THE PEOPLE, BY PLAYING FOR AND TO THEM, BY LETTING THE PERFORMANCE TAKE ME OVER AND GUIDE ME...EVEN WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE THE OTHER PEOPLE ARE DOING ALL OF THE ACTION. THE ULTIMATE GOAL IN MY PERFORMANCE IS TO CREATE A REALITY, NOT AN ILLUSION, OF THE PERFORMANCE WHICH I AND THE AUDIENCE ARE IN....EVEN IF I HAVE TO USE ILLUSIONS TO GET TO THIS REALITY.

THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF MANIPULATION. ALMOST ANYTIME YOU PERFORM TO AN AUDIENCE, YOU MANIPULATE THE AUDIENCE. LET'S GET BEYOND THE NEGATIVE CONNOTATION OF THE WORD "MANIPULATE." PEOPLE GO TO THE THEATRE, MOVIES, CONCERTS, DANCE COMPANIES, ETC., TO HAVE THEIR EMOTIONS MANIPULATED. THEY COME INTO THE PERFORMANCE AREA WITH A WILLINGNESS TO BE MANIPULATED BY THE ARTISTS WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITS. BUT IN MY PERFORMANCES, THE ONES WHICH ARE NOT DIVIDED FROM THE REST OF LIFE BY A THEATRE OR A STAGE, THERE IS NO WAY TO TELL THE PERSON HE IS ENTERING A PERFORMANCE. WHEN I HAVE A FORMAL STRUCTURE, A THEATRE SPACE, AND A SET TIME ENDING...WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON IS NOT WHAT IS SAID TO BE HAPPENING. ALSO IT IS A REALITY THAT IS HOPEFULLY BEING CREATED...PEOPLE WILL BE AFFECTED, INFECTED AND EFFECTED BY THIS REALITY.

PERFORMANCE OBVIOUSLY GOES MUCH FARTHER BACK THAN 1909 WHEN IT BECAME A FORMAL ART FORM. THE FUTURISTS WERE REACTING TO THE BANKRUPTCY OF FORMAL ART, WITH ITS GALLERY POWER SCENE, THE ELITISM OF ART, THE MONEY, THE POLITICS, AND THE SOCIAL SCENE OF ART. THIS IS A TRUE BUT A ONE-SIDED VIEW OF WHY PERFORMANCE APPEARED AT THAT TIME.

I THINK PERFORMANCE CAME INTO EXISTENCE TO FILL A VOID IN WESTERN LIFE. THE VOID WAS THE LACK OF MAGIC AND INSPIRATION. THE TWO AREAS OF CREATIVITY THAT TRADITIONALLY WERE THE SOURCE OF THIS MAGICAL INSPIRATION HAD LONG AGO MOVED FROM MAGIC TO ENTERTAINMENT AND POLITICS. THIS VOID ALSO GAVE BIRTH TO PSYCHOLOGY AT THE SAME TIME PERIOD. I OFTEN GET THE CRITICISM THAT MY WORK IS REALLY PSYCHOLOGY AND THERAPY, AND NOT ART. WHEN IT IS REALIZED THAT PSYCHOLOGY AS A FORMAL SCIENCE AND PERFORMANCE AS A FORMAL ART WERE BORN AT THE SAME TIME, THIS CRITICISM CAN BE ANSWERED. PERFORMANCE AND PSYCHOLOGY ARE BOTH INVOLVED IN SPIRITUAL HEALING BY DIGGING INTO THE HIDDEN MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE ROOT URGE OF PERFORMANCE AND IN GENERAL OF ART.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO GO ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE PRIMAL FIRES AROUND WHICH HUMANS HUDDLED, TELLING ONE ANOTHER DREAM STORIES...NOT TO ENTERTAIN OR IMPRESS ONE ANOTHER. BUT TO KEEP AWAY FEARFUL DEMONS LURKING IN THE COLD DARKNESS JUST OUTSIDE THE FIRELIGHT. THERE WAS NO DIVISION BETWEEN REALITY AND IMAGINATION. THE GODS AND DEMONS WERE REAL. IN THIS RITUAL OF STORYTELLING, THERE WAS NO DIVISION BETWEEN THE STORYTELLER AND LISTENERS. THEY WERE ALL ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE MAGICAL BATTLE OF SURVIVAL. THE RITUALS EXPANDED TO DANCE, CHANT, MUSIC. BUT THE RITUAL WAS TO AFFECT MAGICALLY THE HOSTILE WORLD IN WHICH THE HUMANS FOUND THEMSELVES. THE AUDIENCE OF THESE RITUALS WERE THE NATURAL WORLD, THE GODS, AND THE DEMONS. THEY MARKED THEIR BODIES TO CREATE CHANGES IN THEMSELVES. THEY PAINTED THEIR BODIES TO ACHIEVE TEMPORARILY ALTERED STATES OF REALITY. THEY TATTOOED THEIR BODIES TO CREATE PERMANENT CHANGE.

WHEN THE HUMANS STARTED LIVING IN THE CAVES, THEY DID THEIR RITUALS AND WALL-PAINTINGS IN THE BOWELS OF THE CAVES WHERE NO ONE COULD SEE. THE PURPOSE WAS AN ACTIVE CHANGE...A GOOD HUNT, A SUCESSFUL HUNT, SEXUAL POWER, PLEASING THE GODS, ETC.. ART WAS NOT FOR

WATCHING.

PERFORMANCE ART IS ROOTED IN THE PRIMITIVE AND MYSTICAL CEREMONIES OF INITIATION WHICH I HAD READ ABOUT YEARS BEFORE. THE GOAL WAS TO CALL THE MAGIC STATE FROM PEOPLE. THE SHAMANS KNEW HOW TO DO THIS...THEY DREW THEIR AUDIENCE INTO A FEELING OF UNITY. I WANTED TO DO THAT. THEIR AUDIENCE KNEW THEY WERE PARTICIPATING IN REAL EVENTS. I PUT THIS TO THE TEST IN MY 48-HOUR PIECES IN WHICH I CREATED AN ALTERED REALITY AROUND THE ONE-PERSON AUDIENCE.

I WAS TIRED OF GOING TO MOVIES AND PLAYS WHICH SAID BEING HAPPY AND HAVING FUN IS IMPOSSIBLE...OR AT LEAST VERY HARD. I WANTED TO DO A magus OR A steppenwolf. AND TO PULL THAT OFF, I HAD TO TRUST MYSELF, MY MOTIVES, AND THE RIGHTNESS OF MY PERFORMANCES. THIS IS IDEALISTIC PERFORMANCE...THERE IS A STRONG CASE AGAINST THIS KIND OF PERFORMANCE ULTIMATELY WORKING. BUT I HAVE MADE MY CHOICE...LIKE FOR ME, IF I ADMIT IDEALISTIC PERFORMANCE IS DOOMED, I WOULD SIT IN MY RECLINER AND WATCH i love lucy!

ANYWAY, ONCE THE SELF-TRUST IS IN PLACE, THE NEXT ISSUE WAS VULNERABILITY. LIKE THE PERFORMER I HAVE TO BE VULNERABLE...EVEN IN PIECES WHERE IT APPEARS I AM TOTALLY IN CONTROL AND HAVE COMPLETE POWER. WITHOUT THIS SELF-TRUST AND VULNERABLITY, WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO WOULD FALL FLAT.

THAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE ART. IN REGULAR THEATRE, YOU CAN CLIMB UP ONTO THE ALTAR OF THE STAGE <EVEN WHEN THE STAGE IS A RUG OR OTHER DEFINED AREA,> AND YOU DON'T HAVE TO INTERACT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE, YOU ARE CUT OFF FROM THEM. YOU DON'T RELATE TO THEM DIRECTLY...WHICH IS THE MAIN GOAL OF MY PERFORMANCES. IN THEATRE, WHAT ALSO BLOCKS THE MAGIC THAT I AM AFTER IS THE SYSTEM OF RULES OF AESTHETICS.

THIS ALSO WAS WHAT HAPPENED IN RELIGION. WHEN THE PRIESTS CLIMBED UP TO THE ALTAR, NOT ONLY DID THEY DIVID THEMSELVES FROM THE PEOPLE, BUT ALSO FROM THE VITAL MAGIC.

THE THEATRE PAINTS PICTURES OF "REALITIES," BOTH INNER AND OUTER REALITIES. THE AUDIENCE JUST WATCHES FROM THE OUTSIDE, WATCHING A MOVING PICTURE CREATED BY ACTORS. THE AUDIENCE SUSPENDS DISBELIEF, SITS, AND WATCHES WITH THEIR MINDS. THE ACTORS ACT. EVERYBODY

IS COMFORTABLE AND SAFE. EVERYONE HAS DEFINED ROLES...AND WHEN THE AUDIENCE LEFT THE THEATRE, THEY KNEW IT HAD BEEN JUST PRETEND. ACTORS JUST HAVE TO PUT ON A GOOD SHOW.

AS A PERFORMER, I HAVE TO BE ABLE WITHIN MYSELF TO DO ANYTHING THAT I FEEL NECESSARY TO CREATE THE MAGIC OF THE PERFORMANCE WITHOUT STOPPING TO CHECK MY MOTIVES. THIS IS THE SELF-TRUST. THIS SELF-TRUST CREATES VULNERABILITY.

THE PERFORMER HAS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS AUDIENCE. THIS RUNS FROM THEIR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING WHILE THEY ARE IN THE PERFORMANCE...TO NOT TAKING THEM OUT ON A LIMB AND LEAVING THEM THERE. A MORAL GREY AREA IS LEFT AFTER THE PERFORMANCE, AND THEY GO BACK TO THE NORMAL WORLD, AND THEY FREAK OUT BECAUSE OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO REALITIES. IN MY MIND, THE FREAK OUT IS AN OPENING OF DOORS...WHICH IS THE AIM OF THE PERFORMANCE. BUT WHAT THE PERSON DOES WHEN THE DOORS ARE OPENED IS HIS RESPONSIBILITY.

IN THE PERFORMANCE, I HAVE TO INVOLVE MYSELF WITH THE AUDIENCE, PERSON-TO-PERSON. I HAVE TO FOLLOW WHATEVER FEELING I HAVE IN THE MOMENT, DOING WHATEVER IT TAKES TO DRAW THE AUDIENCE DEEPER. THIS IS WHAT I MEAN BY VULNERABILTY. IT DOES HAVE A CERTAIN RUTHLESS QUALITY TO IT.

IN THE LATE 70's WE STARTED OUR PUBLIC PERFORMANCES BY DOING LONG RITUALISTIC PLAYS. OVER THE YEARS, THE GROUP BRANCHED OUT TO DO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF LIVE AND VIDEO PIECES, INCLUDING the outrageous beauty revue WHICH WAS BY FAR MY MOST POPULAR WORK...IN TERMS OF HOW MANY PEOPLE SAW IT.

BUT IN PERFORMANCE, UNLIKE THEATRE, THE SUCCESS OF A PIECE SHOULD NOT BE JUDGED BY HOW MANY PEOPLE SEE IT, BUT BY HOW FAR IT WENT BEYOND THE TABOOS, BY ITS MAGIC POWER FOR CHANGE. BY THIS STANDARD, MY BEST WORK WITH THE GROUP WAS OUR PERFORMANCES WITHIN THE WORKSHOP AND A SERIES OF 48-HOUR DREAM PERFORMANCES IN THE LATE 70's.

SINCE 1983, I HAVE BEEN DOING A PERFORMANCE SERIES AT U.C. BERKELEY WHICH HAS GIVEN ME A LAB WHERE I CAN DEVELOP PIECES BY DOING THEM OVER AND OVER WITHOUT THE PRESSURES OF MAKING MONEY OR ENTERTAINING. THESE PIECES ARE WHAT GOT ME THE N.E.A.

FELLOWSHIP, AND THEY ARE THE ONES I AM DOING ON MY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TOUR. THE FREEDOM THAT TOM ODEN, THE FORMER DIRECTER OF THE STUDIO, GAVE ME FROM ENTERTAINING AND MONEY FOCUS IS WHY THE PIECES COULD DEVELOP. THE SOLE PURPOSE OF THE SERIES WAS TO GO BEYOND LIMITS AND TABOOS...TO BLOW PEOPLE'S MINDS INTO A SURREAL STATE. SOMETIMES IT WORKS. SOMETIMES THEY ENTERTAINED THE PEOPLE...AND SOMETIMES THE PIECES BOTH WORKED AND ENTERTAINED...AMAZING AS THAT SEEMS.

PERFORMANCE ART, THE ART OF PERFORMANCE, IS ROOTED IN THE PRIVATE GAMES OF BABIES WHERE EVERY MOVE AND GESTURE HAS ITS OWN MEANING TO THE BABY...IT IS ROOTED IN THE CREATIVE AND THE DESTRUCTIVE GAMES THAT A LITTLE KID DOES WHEN HE IS ALL ALONE...GAMES THAT ADULTS STILL DO, BUT WILL NOT ADMIT DOING, EVEN TO THEMSELVES.

IT IS ROOTED IN THE RITUALS OF MAGIC AND RELIGION WHERE PEOPLE CAME TOGETHER TO BRING A DIFFERENT REALITY INTO THEIR REALITY. IT IS ROOTED IN THE SURREAL, THE PRIVATE, IN MADNESS. IT IS ROOTED IN DIRECT INVOLVEMENT.

THE MAIN PURPOSE FOR A PERFORMANCE IS CHANGE, IS TO CREATE A FRAME IN THIS REALITY, A MAGICAL FRAME WHERE SOMETHING THAT USUALLY DOES NOT HAPPEN, HAPPENS.

I USE NUDITY AND PHYSICAL ACTS WHICH MOST PEOPLE WOULD CALL SEXUAL. I HAVE DEBATED WITH MYSELF ABOUT STOPPING RESISTING THE LABEL sexual. BY INSISTING WHAT I AM DOING IS NOT SEXUAL, I AM OPENING MYSELF TO PEOPLE QUESTIONING MY HONESTY AND INTEGRITY. IF I ACCEPT THE SEXUAL LABEL, PEOPLE WOULD JUST HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THEY LIKE SEX IN ART...DECIDE WHETHER IT IS ART OR NOT. THAT WOULD BE THE DEPTH OF THE QUESTIONING. THEY MAY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE SEEING SEX AS ART...BUT THAT UNCOMFORTABLENESS WOULD BE JUST FROM BREAKING THE TABOO OF SEX...WHICH WOULD NOT BE THAT BIG OF A DEAL. WHAT I AM DOING IS TAKING NUDITY AND ACTS THAT ARE USUALLY CONSIDERED SEXUAL AND GIVING THEM A NEW, NONSEXUAL CONTEXT. THAT CREATES A TENSION, A CONFLICT, AN EXAMINING, A LEAP INTO SOMETHING NEW. THAT IS WHAT I AM AFTER. THIS LEAP INTO NEWNESS IS WHY PEOPLE WHO ARE NORMALLY COMFORTABLE WITH CASUAL NUDITY AND CASUAL SEX SOMETIMES GET VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE NUDITY AND EROPLAY IN MY WORK. BY TAKING "SEXUAL" ACTS AND SINCERELY PUTTING THEM INTO A DIFFERENT

CONTEXT, IT CREATES ANOTHER REALITY, ANOTHER WAY OF RELATING. IT ALSO CREATES CONFLICT WITH THE NORMAL REALITY...AND THAT CONFLICT MAY CHANGE, IN AN UNDERGROUND SORT OF A WAY, THE NORMAL REALITY. I THINK ART...OR AT LEAST THIS KIND OF ART...SHOULD CREATE CONFLICT AND CHANGE. AND I LIKE RELATING WITH PEOPLE IN THIS "UNNORMAL" WAY IN THIS DIFFERENT REALITY. THIS IS WHY I DO PERFORMANCE.

TODAY I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT ONE KIND OF ART IN WHICH PERFORMANCE IS ONE MEDIUM. IT IS ART AS A BATTLE, AN UNDERGROUND WAR AGAINST FRAGMENTATION. THIS KIND OF ART IS A WAR AGAINST FRAGMENTATION.

THE BATTLE IS ON ALL REALITIES. THE CONTROLLERS HAVE ALWAYS TRIED TO FRAGMENT US. FRAGMENT US FROM EACH OTHER. IMPRISON US IN ISLANDS OF SEX, COLOR, RELIGION, POLITICS, CLASSES, LABELS, ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC., ETC.. THEY FRAGMENT OUR INNER WORLDS, THEY BLOW OUR INDIVIDUAL REALITIES APART, AND PLAY THE PIECES AGAINST ONE ANOTHER. THEY ARE US, OR A PART OF US. THEY ARE THE CONTROLLERS, THE POLITICIANS, THE SEXISTS, THE WOMEN'S LIBBERS, THE PORNOGRAPHERS, THE CENSORS, THE MORALISTS, THE CHURCH, THE MEDIA, THE BUSINESSMEN, EDUCATORS, THE VICTIMS AND THE POWERFUL.

THEY ARE US. THEY HAVE DIVIDED US FROM OUR POWER, FROM OUR BEAUTY, FROM OUR LUST FOR LIFE AND PLEASURE. THEY HAVE DIVIDED US FROM MOST OF REALITY...DIVIDED DYING FROM LIVING...SEX FROM LIVING, SEX FROM PLEASURE. WE ARE KEPT IN BOXES OF FEAR, OF MISTRUST. WE ARE KEPT WAITING...KEPT WAITING TO DO WHAT WE WANT...WAITING FOR ENOUGH MONEY, ENOUGH SCHOOLING, FOR EVERYTHING TO BE RIGHT. WE ARE KEPT WAITING AND PROTECTING AND HIDING AND SUFFERING.

TIME TO DO BATTLE WITH THE BOXES.

OUR TOOLS ARE MAGIC, OUR BODIES, TABOOS, AND DREAMS.

THIS KIND OF ART CAN BE BUBBLES OF CHILDHOOD...HIDDEN PLACE WHERE YOU CAN PLAY AND EXPLORE...IT IS THE KIDS' UNDER-THE-COVERS WORLD, THE PLAYHOUSE, THE TREEHOUSE, THE CAVE, BEHIND THE BARN, PLAYING DOCTOR, CARS AT DRIVE-INS BEFORE GOING ALL THE WAY, HUCK FINN'S RAFT, TEEPEES. PEOPLE ARE AFRAID OF THIS AREA OF LUSTY EXPLORING THAT THEY THINK THEY HAVE

OUT-GROWN...BUT THEY ARE SUCKED INTO IT.

BUT THIS KIND OF ART CAN HAVE A MORE HEAVY-DUTY MAGICAL SIDE TO IT THAT SHOCKS, OFFENDS, AND BREAKS NEW GROUND. THIS SIDE IS WHAT IS LOCKED IN, THE SUBCONCIOUS, THE WOMB, THE UNDERGROUND, HELL/HEAVEN, PLEASURE/TORTURE, THE COFFIN, THE GRAVE, BIRTH/DEATH/REBIRTH, DREAM/NIGHTMARE, THE HIDDEN WORLD OF TABOOS.

ARTISTS OF THIS BREED NEED TO BE WARRIORS WHO ARE WILLING TO GO INTO THE AREAS OF TABOO, WILLING TO PUSH BEYOND WHERE IT IS COMFORTABLE AND SAFE TO EXPLORE AND BUILD A LARGER ZONE OF SAFENESS.

comments are welcome.

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